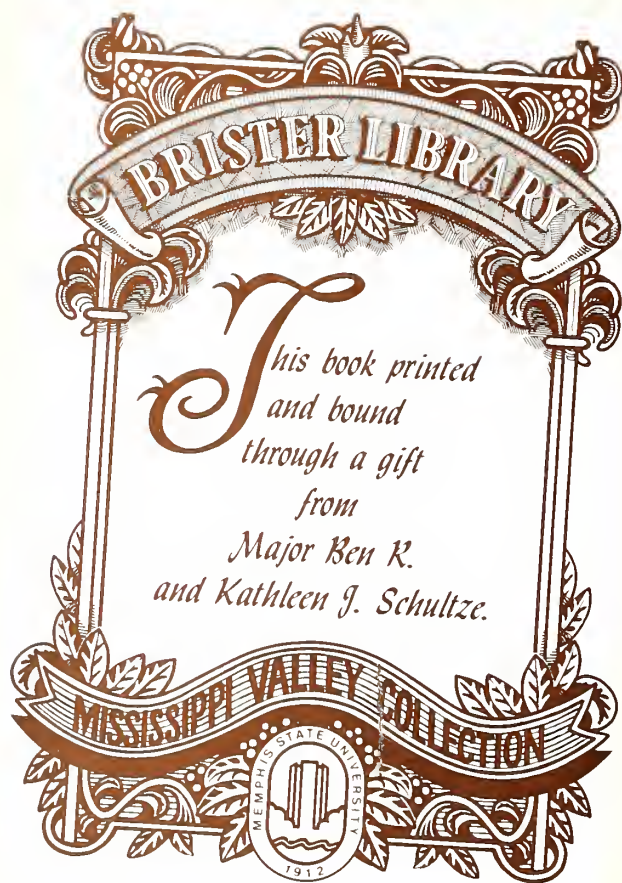


RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY
INTERVIEWS WITH
MRS. BUFORD ELLINGTON

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - ELISE JURASCHEK
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
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INTERVIEWS WITH MRS. BUFORD ELLINGTON

MAY 5, 1980

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Ellington

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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PLACE Nashville, Tennessee
DATE May 5, 1980

Mrs. Buford Ellington
(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY,
THIS PROJECT IS "AN ORAL HISTORY OF RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY."
THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MRS. BUFORD ELLINGTON. THE PLACE IS NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS MAY 5, 1980. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES
W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS
STATE UNIVERSITY, AND IS TRANSCRIBED BY ELISE JURASCHEK.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mrs. Ellington, this is a fine place to have an
 interview! It is a beautiful place in Nashville,
just off Franklin Drive, in your study at the back of the home with a
small creek running at the back of your yard, on a beautiful, sunlit,
May day. I can't think of a better time to do an interview and I appre-
ciate your taking the time.

I'd like to ask a few questions about your life and experience as
one of the First Ladies of Tennessee. And, let's start early. Where
were you born?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I was born in Marshall County, in the country.
 Not very far from Lewisburg, Tennessee. Lewis-
burg is the county seat of Marshall County.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's also the home of former Governor Jim
 McCord, you know.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right. Right. And Governor Henry Horton came
 from Marshall County. We've had three gover-
nors from Marshall County.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you grow up in Marshall County?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, I did, on a farm. My father owned a small farm. I had one sister and two brothers. We all had our chores to do. And you hear someone say, "Well, back in my time, you know, I walked so-and-so blocks to school." Well, we walked three miles to school. We had chores to do in the morning. We walked to school and walked back. So, we got a lot of exercise!

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, when I started to school, I walked two miles, which wasn't as far. And you lived outside of Lewisburg and walked to school in town?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, no. We walked to a country school--two rooms.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was it called?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Berlin. B-e-r-l-i-n School and that was three miles from our farm. But, on the way there were several families. You know, little children would come out to start to school. By the time we got to the school building I guess there were eight or ten children in all.

DR. CRAWFORD: How large was Berlin School?

MRS. ELLINGTON: It was two rooms--just two teachers. That's all. Very small.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you go to school from there?

MRS. ELLINGTON: To the high school in Lewisburg, Marshall County High School.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, how did you get to school there? Did they have buses?

MRS. ELLINGTON: No, oh no! I stayed in Lewisburg, with some friends and attended high school there.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember most about going to school at Berlin?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, trying to stay warm in the winter-time! Because there was just one big stove, so to speak. That was our only way of heating the building. But, we wore heavy shoes and warm clothing. And then another thing, I remember about the desks. Seems like they were all carved up with initials on them. And the teacher at the blackboard, you know. And singing in the morning. We would open the day's work by--we would have a song or two and there would be scripture read and we had prayer--at that time. And yes, the playground. We didn't have very good equipment, you know, to play ball. But we had fun playing hop-scotch, and playing ball. So, I guess those were the main things. And then, oh yes! Lunch time. We would bring our lunch--in a big, basket-like from home. And we would have goddies such as country ham, because living on the farm we raised all of our foodstuffs, you see. So, that was a big event then at lunch time to get in the big basket.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suppose all the students looked forward to recess and lunch hour.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes! Oh, yes they did! We'd storm out

the door and hit the playground out there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were there many small country schools like that in Marshall County when you went to school there?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I'm sure that there were. I have no way of knowing, but of course, that is a thing of the past. It's sort of sad in a way because it's true that one teacher maybe if she had four grades to teach that was very time consuming, and not a great deal of time, not individual time, you see. If a child was having problems with math or English or what have you--there was just not enough time--you see, for the teacher to give any individual time for the child. But you know, we made it through fairly well.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you went there until you went to high school in Lewisburg?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right. Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember first about the change to high school, Mrs. Ellington?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, the principal of our high school-- Marshall County High School was Dr. Jack Batey.

DR. CRAWFORD: Batey?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Batey. B-a-t-e-y. Well, he was, I guess, sympathetic in a way but he was very stern. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Teachers used to be more stern.

MRS. ELLINGTON: He did that. And he expected a lot from his

students. He had a great bass voice. And there again, in those days we would have one or two songs in the morning. It was a pleasure to listen to his bass voice, and he enjoyed singing. But, the things maybe in high school--again, you were looking forward to the recesses. And well, you got into another world. You met boys and girls from different parts of the world, because really, my world was very small when we lived in the country before I started to high school. You knew your neighbors. But the neighbors were not very close by because we all lived on farms, you see, but visiting occasionally. So, you were beginning to see people from other parts of the county coming into high school. And, of course, then you had your boyfriends and you were beginning to notice. Then, I guess Home Economics was a department that I was real interested in. I played basketball. I've always been sports-minded. But, that was a new experience for me then to play basketball. We went to various schools in competition. And I know one school that, it seems that, the girls were bigger and rougher than any other place and that was Belfast. Now, that was a high school that was out sort of south of Lewisburg.

DR. CRAWFORD: Belfast?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: And you played basketball against them?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, and we always got beat when we would play Belfast. But, we played Cornerville very close and some other surrounding towns. But, one time we had come

to Nashville in a regional, I guess that's what you would call it, tournament like, you know. And I think they used, I've forgotten now, what gym we had used but we played, about three different teams and had done pretty well. We finally got beat but that was quite an experience for us to get to come to Nashville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that the first time you came to Nashville?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Probably it was, I don't remember. Probably it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: You didn't travel a great deal at first?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh no. No, we didn't. Now the State Fair-- now that was a big event, you know, for country people.

DR. CRAWFORD: In Nashville?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. When we would come to the State Fair, that would be an all day event. And we didn't get to attend the fairs, though, until after our first automobile we had.

DR. CRAWFORD: When was that? Do you remember?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I don't remember but I know it was a Ford. If I can use that word, one you had to crank.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's the way they all were then.

MRS. ELLINGTON: So, that was a big day for us when we would come to the fair, you know, and see all. . . .

My father was interested in the livestock, particularly. My mother liked to attend all the things in the Women's Building, the quilting

and the sewing and the canning things. So, we just always had a good time, but it was an all day event, I'll tell you that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, the roads weren't nearly as good then.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, no! And it took you a while to drive.

DR. CRAWFORD: You'd drive up in the morning and go back late, I suppose.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes. Go back home in time to milk the cows.

DR. CRAWFORD: What farming did your father do mainly? What was his crop?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, we had a variety of things, mostly corn and hay. Because as I said, we lived off of the farm. We grew our own vegetables; we grew our own pork. But, we would have the corn and the hay and beans. Where we lived, we hadn't gotten into cotton or tobacco at that time. Later on, other farmers had ventured out into growing tobacco but we never did do that. Ours was mostly corn and hay.

DR. CRAWFORD: And milk cows?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes! We always had. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Chickens and a garden and an orchard?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes! Oh, yes!

DR. CRAWFORD: You did have almost everything there!

MRS. ELLINGTON: We did. My mother would go to this little country store to get sugar and salt and black pepper. And maybe some flavoring, of some sort for cakes. But, you

see, we grew our own wheat and my father then would take that and we would go to the mill to have that made into flour. So, we really. . . we could have lived. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Independently, practically.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Very independently.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, that has sort of been a tradition in Tennessee farming, you know, for a long time.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, yes, I'm sure it has been.

DR. CRAWFORD: What way your name before you married?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Cheek. C-h-e-e-k.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was an old family in Tennessee, wasn't it?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. My grandfather, I do not remember too well, but he was in the Civil War. And he lived down in Maury County. My father had two brothers and they had always lived, pretty well in Marshall and Maury County. Stayed pretty close. All farmers. One brother did get into the milling business of making flour and meal.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was his mill? On a creek?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh. Uh-huh, at Hardison Mill down there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Hardison Mill?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was his name?

MRS. ELLINGTON: That was J.O. Creek.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did they call that place Hardison Mill?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I don't know, unless, you know, there had

been families around there sort of like your Bryant Station you spoke of 'while ago. Probably that was it, I do not know.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you leave high school at Lewisburg?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I left in '26, I guess it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you meet Buford Ellington?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I met him in '28. I had gone to Bowling Green Business University for two years. At that time you could teach, you see, with two years of college work. I had taken commercial work, business. So, I went to Durant, Mississippi. You know, the Bowling Green Business University--it isn't in existence any more, but anyway--you had a choice of about three different schools that you could choose from. So, why I chose Durant--no particular reason. He was in school at Millsaps--Jackson, Mississippi, at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was at Millsaps, and you went to Durant?

MRS. ELLINGTON: And I went to Durant, about sixty miles. And it was sometime when he was home from school that I met him. We doing a play, the faculty there at the Durant High School. We were working up a play and we were recruiting people, you know, to take part in the play. I've forgotten what the name of it was now. So, Buford had come in one night---They had to, you know, just had come by. There were come new teachers there and just to meet the new teachers and so forth and so on. So, I met him there. Then, on weekends when he came home. . .Why, you know, I would see him on--like on weekends, and then. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: That was in '28?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah. So then I taught in '29, and we married in '30.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see. What day in 1930 did you get married?

MRS. ELLINGTON: That was December the 19th, December the nineteenth.

DR. CRAWFORD: Just before the Christmas holidays.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were teaching that year?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh. Right. That is right.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long before you moved back to Tennessee, after that?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Ten years, because we nearly starved to death during that period, you know, the Depression.

So, and he had various jobs.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were married less than a year before the Great Depression started.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were teaching, and what was he doing then, in '28?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, well he stayed on at school as long as he could and then I think he was working in a dry cleaning place with somebody. You know, everybody just did what-

ever you could to bring in a few dollars. And then he sold some--oh that was I guess after we married--he sold some farm machinery. Just anything that he could get to do, just about.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you live in Durant after you were married?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, we stayed a while with his parents and then there was a little place. . . . He was working on a religious education, part of it in Millsaps, thinking that, you know, he might go into teaching. And we moved to this little place, rather on weekends. I was teaching then and after school I'd go on weekends to this little place called Sturgis, Mississippi. And he had--there were a couple little churches that he taught in--hoping that he could finish his college work because he didn't quite finish. He lacked about two quarters, I guess, finishing his work. So, after that we had moved to Marks, Mississippi. We left Marks and came back to Tennessee to Marshall County here and bought this little country store there at Verona. So we stayed there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see. That was '38 that you went to Verona?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah. Well, it was a little bit later than that. 'Bout '40, or something like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: That still was in the Depression, although it was getting toward the end. But you didn't know that, I suppose.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, this little country store, you know, that along with the one room school house, you know,

is almost a thing of the past. But, this little store was sort of a gathering place, like Friday night and Saturday, you know, for all the farm people around. They would come, you know, in the late afternoon after they'd finished their chores. And the men and the women, you know, would sit around and some of them would play Rook. And that was a big pastime. And we would just enjoy visiting. It was sort of a social center.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you know the people at Verona before you moved back there?

MRS. ELLINGTON: No.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was not near Berlin?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, it wasn't too far from Berlin. But, there was another little, two little stores in Berlin, besides the little school house up there. But here at Verona there was at that time, there were two stores, two little country stores. But later on the people, the owner of them had passed away and it was closed. But we had a very good business and we had one of those rolling stores. You probably never heard of that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see. That was a truck that traveled around. . . .

MRS. ELLINGTON: Through the country roads. People that couldn't come to the little country town, you see, and they would trade their eggs, you see, for everything. You know, we had dried beans, rice, macaroni, and vienna sausage and soybeans, coffee,

sugar and stuff like that on the truck.

DR. CRAWFORD: Some people didn't have to go to the store
then, it would come where they were.

MRS. ELLINGTON: No. But, of course, with better roads and
then the supermarkets coming in, why, people
had a better choice, you see, by going in to the town. But, you know, we
kept it on for a while. 'Course we enjoyed the neighborhood and the com-
munity there.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who drove the rolling store?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, it might be one person; it might be
somebody else. Somebody, you know, if they
weren't working, maybe, that particular week.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you do that any?

MRS. ELLINGTON: No, I didn't drive the rolling store. I
could have but I didn't. But they went all
over the back roads, you know, maybe on Mondays and Fridays would be in one
direction and Tuesdays and Thursdays in some other direction. It was fun.

DR. CRAWFORD: I had never seen one, but I knew when you
told me because I had heard about them. That
was a good service.

MRS. ELLINGTON: We even had what you call some piece goods--
some materials--not a big variety, but some-
times some lady would want to make some aprons, you know, something like
that and they would buy that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever travel on these trips with the rolling store?

MRS. ELLINGTON: No.

DR. CRAWFORD: 'Cause you were taking care of things back at home, then.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, I guess, I helped in the store quite a bit. 'Course, we had the house and we had the vegetable garden and so forth so there wasn't much time for me to.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you live at the store, or nearby?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. Across the road. It wasn't even a street, but across the road.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was there any special reason you took that store at Verona? Was that a place where you knew people or something?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, no. An uncle of mine and another man owned the store and they were wanting to sell it. And my mother and father, at that time, were living at Chapel Hill and they told us about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Chapel Hill in Marshall County?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. So that was how we knew about that.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you like being in charge of the store?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, it was fun. It might not have seemed like fun to some people. But there were several houses in Verona, and ladies after they'd finished their morning chores, you know, would come to the store. And we had a telephone in the

store and. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: And there weren't many telephones in the community so people would come to make calls, wouldn't they?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right, right. Uh-huh. And like a party line and we'd ring. . . .(Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, let's see, and a stove in the store and chairs that people would visit a while when they came.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right, right.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a real country store!

MRS. ELLINGTON: It was! We had everything, as my husband use to say from white beans to horse collars.

DR. CRAWFORD: You sold a general line of dry goods and groceries, too.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right. And the snuff, you know, then there was, I remember, they had these [for] each person that would come in they had a particular kind of tobacco. You know, not many people had the money to buy cigarettes, they would roll their own cigarettes, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: They would buy sacks of tobacco?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were they beginning to grow tobacco around there by that time?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh, probably so, probably so.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you glad to be back in Tennessee?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, I was.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did you like Mississippi?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, it was fine I'm sure, but we just
were having such a hard time making a living.
I mean as far as that. . .it was sort of rough!

DR. CRAWFORD: Buford had thought about going into Christian
Education, hadn't he?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh, Uh-huh.

DR. CRAWFORD: So then you were in business back in Tennessee?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh. Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were times very hard in the 1930s before you
came back?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes. They were. They were.

DR. CRAWFORD: Of course, they were bad in Tennessee, too.
But, I know having a store. . . .

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, you know, we didn't have to do without,
maybe like people in cities during those times.
Now, we had the basic things. You could survive, you know. But there
was no money, for extra things. You know, we had a comfortable house,
even though we had a log burning stove. A comfortable house, and we had
enough food to eat. And, I had always done a lot of sewing, you know,
made my own clothes. Then, when my daughter was born, you know, I made

all of our clothes. Enjoyed it, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: You really did a little of everything at that time!

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh. Right, I did.

DR. CRAWFORD: But, you just needed to find something better to do.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, I guess, you know, if you didn't meet other people or if you spent all of your time in one little local, so to speak, you don't know that there are other things out there. But my husband was a person who enjoyed people. And he just had boundless energy. And was not afraid to try something. We were active in the Farm Bureau work, and I guess that really led to him being involved, being a part of the Tennessee Farmers Mutual Insurance Company. And that was what he was doing, you see, when he decided to go. . . Now, who got him interested in running Frank Clement's campaign, I do not know. But, I know it was a big decision for us to make.

DR. CRAWFORD: This was the one in '52.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, he had gotten involved. . . .

MRS. ELLINGTON: He was in legislature.

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh. He had gotten involved in the Farm Bureau and with which insurance company?

MRS. ELLINGTON: That was the Tennessee Farmers' Mutual. But when he was in legislature I know he had talked

to several people there in Lewisburg about running for the legislature.
And he served the one term.

DR. CRAWFORD: What year was that he ran?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Now, I believe it was '48.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that's probably how Frank Clement got acquainted with him?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Possibly.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did he decide to run for the legislature in 1948?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, there were several people by that time we had met. You know, people in Lewisburg. So I guess in just conversation, you know, "Well, why don't you run for the legislature? We need somebody, you know, like you from Marshall County, you know, to help us to get road money, school money and those things." As I said, he liked to try to do things.

DR. CRAWFORD: You did not move to Nashville during that time, I suppose.

MRS. ELLINGTON: No.

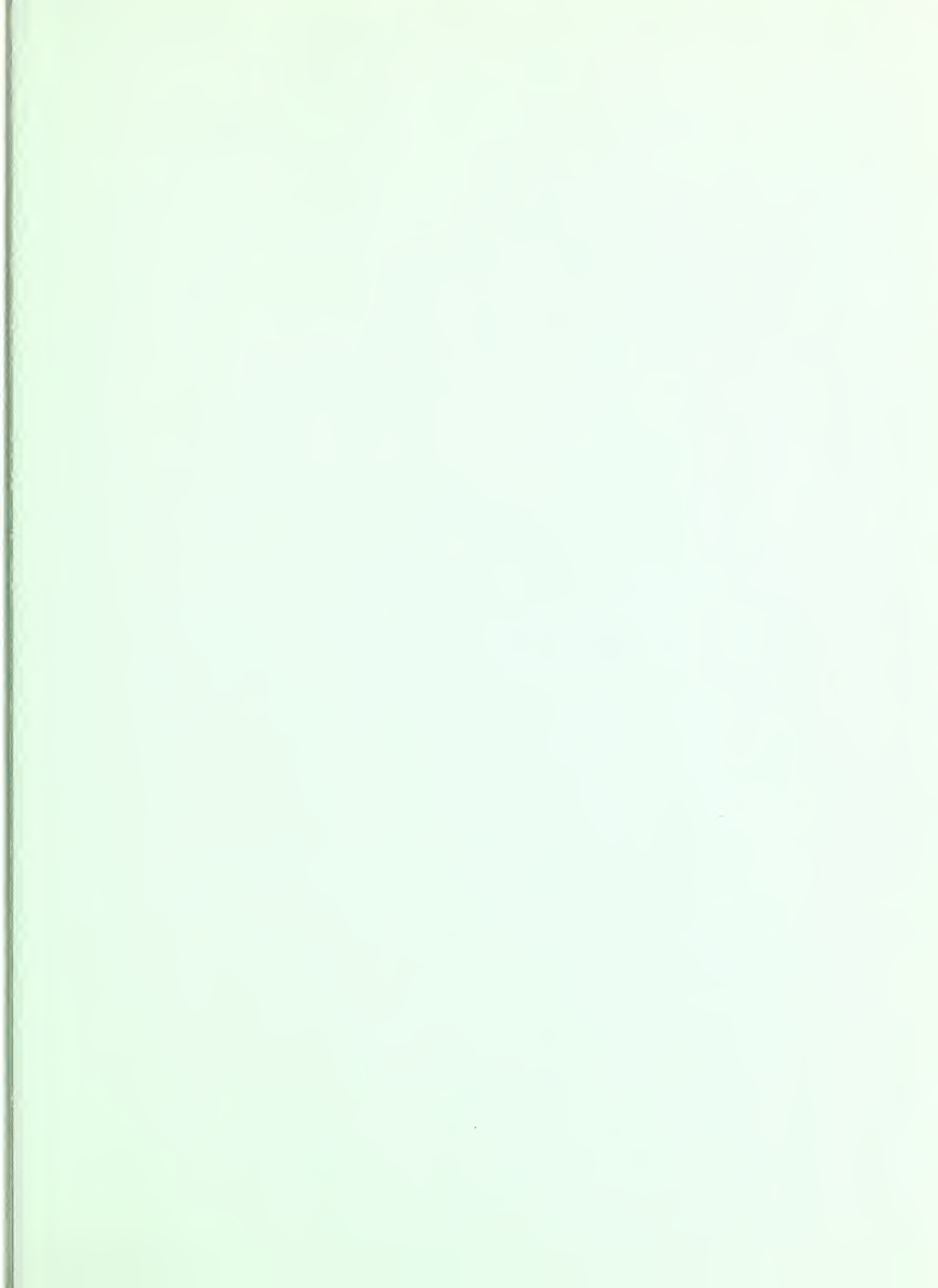
DR. CRAWFORD: He would come up only during the week.

Mrs. Ellington, to back a little, how did you move from Mississippi back to Tennessee?

MRS. ELLINGTON: How did we move?

DR. CRAWFORD: Uh-huh.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, by truck and car, and an old car.



THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "AN ORAL HISTORY OF TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY." THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MRS. BUFORD ELLINGTON. THE PLACE IS NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS MAY 5, 1980. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY, AND IS TRANSCRIBED BY ELISE JURASCHEK. THIS IS INTERVIEW NUMBER TWO.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mrs. Ellington, I'd like to ask you a few questions about the change from living in Verona that got you up into Nashville. When did you first realize that your husband's political activity would lead to your having to give things up there and move?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, the move--back to the first part of your question--was traumatic, from living in a little community of Verona and coming to Nashville. Now, I guess maybe I, without realizing it fully, knew that my husband was intensely interested in politics. He was interested in Marshall County and was establishing himself as a person that someone could go to and say, "Well, see if you can get this done. I need this. I need some better roads out in a certain part of the county. See what you can do." And people were coming to him asking for help. And there were a lot of areas of Marshall County that certainly needed some help as far as roads, better schools, schools buses and those things were concerned. But, I guess, when we discussed

the business of him resigning from the insurance company and going to work in the campaign for Frank Clement that was traumatic, because not knowing whether the campaign would be successful or not and we were left without any income, so to speak, you see. It was a very big decision to make.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you have trouble making it?

MRS. ELLINGTON: No, his mind was made up. (Laughter) He felt that in Frank Clement, here was a person who had a lot of vitality, a lot of intelligence, and that would be going places. As I said, I really don't know when and where he met Governor Clement, but they worked well together.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, when had he changed from operating the store to working for the insurance company?

MRS. ELLINGTON: We kept the store on, had a person there in the community that ran it, you know, for a while. I just couldn't give you any date precisely on that, but this person would operate and keep it open and I just really don't know the date when they were first organizing the Tennessee Farmers' Insurance Company.

DR. CRAWFORD: But you started for a while having someone manage the store?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were still living there though?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh yes. Because we moved from Verona here, to Nashville.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you move when the Clement campaign started?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Fifty-three.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been after he was elected.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah--after he was elected; that's when we moved. We moved in July after he went in office in January.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes, he was sworn in in January.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah, right.

DR. CRAWFORD: And the campaign itself had involved travel all over the state?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh yes! Oh yes!

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you move when you first came to Nashville?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Here.

DR. CRAWFORD: At this home? Well, you were fortunate to find this one at the beginning. That got you a good start in Nashville.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes. I guess so. It's lovely, quiet neighborhood, and a stable neighborhood.

DR. CRAWFORD: And it's far enough out that it almost seems like a rural setting.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, that's true but yet you're just ten min-

utes from shopping centers, Green Hills,
Hundred Oaks.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now, let's see, when he went to work for the
administration he went as Commissioner of
Agriculture?

MRS. ELLINGTON: He was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture.
A campaign manager, as you well know, has a
choice of departments or jobs. And since my husband was not a lawyer--
so many of our governors were lawyers, had that background--but we were
rural; we were farm people and he felt like [that] the Agricultural
Department would be better for him. It's an enormous department, part
of our government.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where was the headquarters located then, in '53?

MRS. ELLINGTON: They were just scattered uptown in various
buildings.

DR. CRAWFORD: And it was later that the Ellington Agricultural
Center was established.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Too bad that wasn't set up at the beginning.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right. . .right, right. I've always thought
that would have been a beautiful place for the
Governor's residence out there. There's so much space out there and
that building is just a magnificent building, I think.

DR. CRAWFORD: It's a beautiful place in itself. Was that one

of his contributions? Did he start planning for that?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Right, right.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did your life change after you moved to Nashville?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, it changed, I guess, in quite a few ways.

We had been accustomed to going to a small, rural church. So, we visited around here a bit and found a small membership not too far, about five minutes from here, where I still attend. Then my daughter attended school in the elementary school here in Glendale. We had been going to a small school and that was a big adjustment, see, for her. And my son had just, I guess, had just finished high school and then he was going to Middle Tennessee State University. My daughter was graduated from there, too. But it was going to supermarkets here and we were not accustomed to doing that. Bigger churches, bigger schools, and so forth.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which church did you decide you'd like to go to?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Glendale United Methodist Church.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was convenient?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, yes. It's just about five minutes from here.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you get back to Marshall County often, for a while?

MRS. ELLINGTON: We tried but, and we really wanted to, but you don't want to completely cut your ties because

some of the finest and the best friends we've ever had are in Marshall County and around Verona, those that are left there. But your time was being taken up with all these other things because as a commissioner, he was called on to go from one end of the state, you see, to the other for various things. All the meetings, all the speeches, plus the work in his office itself, and then, the children in school and there just wasn't time to go back.

DR. CRAWFORD: It took a lot of traveling time, didn't it?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, it did. It really did.

DR. CRAWFORD: How much of that did you travel with him?

MRS. ELLINGTON: As Commissioner of Agriculture, these night meetings that he would go to if it was not going to be a meeting that went way on into the night having to get someone to stay here with the children, then I would attend a lot of the evening meetings. Where there was a dinner and we went to a lot of the county horse shows. That was something else my husband was interested in--horses. We used to go to the county horse shows and that was just part of our activity you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: That involved a lot of travel, I bet?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, it did. It really did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you able to take the children on any of the trips?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, sometimes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you like most about his work as

Commissioner of Agriculture?

MRS. ELLINGTON: I guess he was happy, doing what he was doing, and he thought that he was making some contributions to agriculture. Having lived on the farm and lived off of the farm all his life, that he understood a lot of the problems, particularly the small farmers. And the small farm is just non-existent almost now. I think he wanted, and he did, he made some very important contributions to the Agricultural Department of Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Agriculture needed some help by then, you know.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, it did.

DR. CRAWFORD: And then, of course, after his service there, he decided to run for governor himself, in 1958.

So you had another change to deal with, because I know the campaign was considerably different from the work as Commissioner of Agriculture.

And I know that was a busy time for you.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yes, it was. Very busy! You know trying to keep your home sort of going.

DR. CRAWFORD: How old were the children then?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Well, Ann, let's see. We moved here in '53, she was about seventeen, I guess, something like that. John was then in college at that time.

Going back to his deciding to make this race. You see, Governor Clement had two--I think I'm right on that--two terms. And then. . . .

DR. CRAWFORD: Two years and four.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah, and then four. And my husband, then
was asked to manage the campaign for another
person and, you know, he just decided we'd do it for ourselves, you know.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was in '58?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Uh-huh.

DR. CRAWFORD: May I ask who the other person was who asked
him to manage?

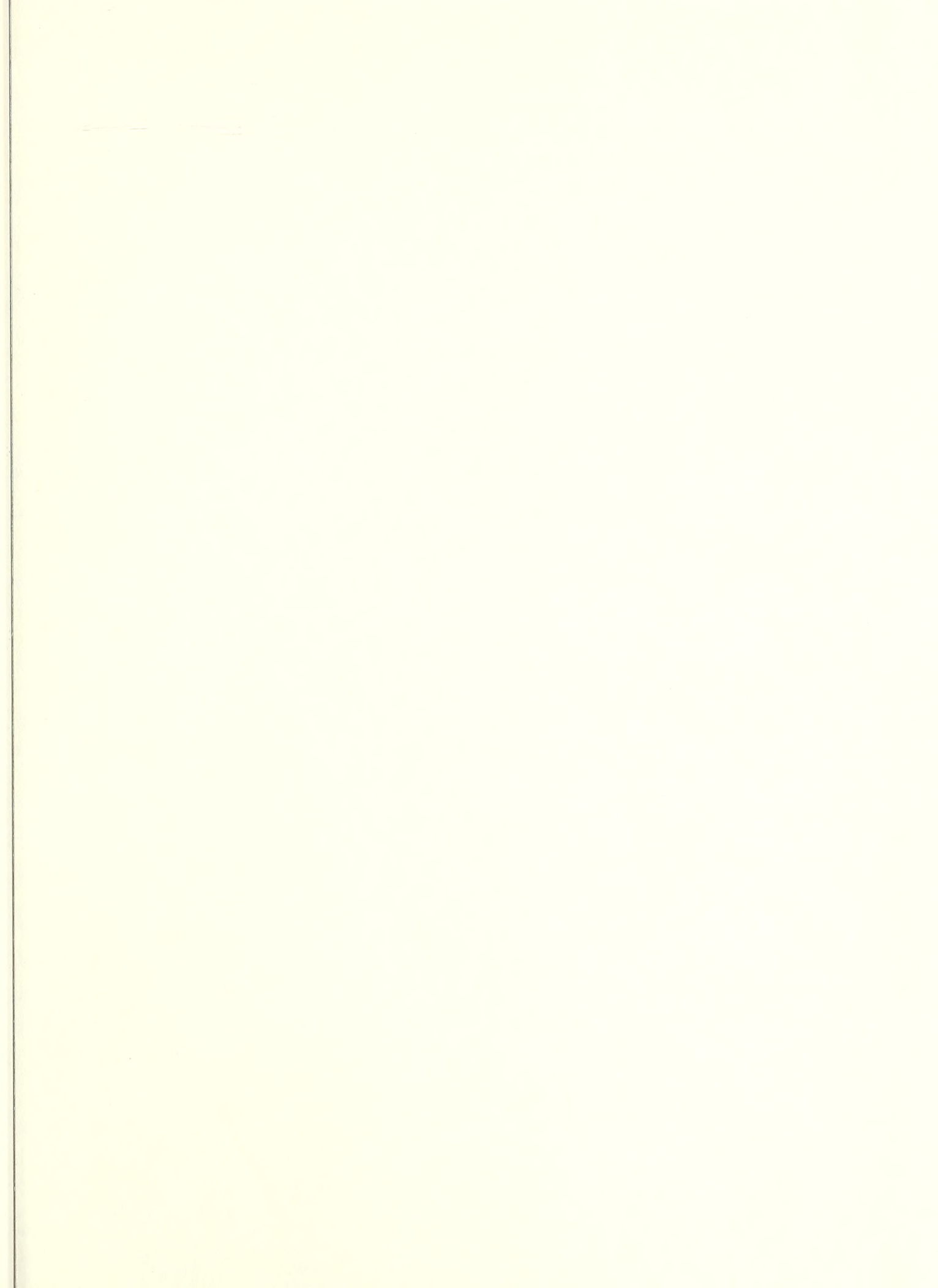
MRS. ELLINGTON: I don't know, frankly.

DR. CRAWFORD: But since he was going to manage one he just
decided to manage his own?

MRS. ELLINGTON: Yeah. I don't know that he ever told me.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I think it was a better decision since
it did get him to be governor, and probably
he didn't have to work much harder than he would have in someone else's
campaign.

MRS. ELLINGTON: Oh, probably not.



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